

THE RELATIONS
OF THE
Temporal & Spiritual Power
IN THE DIFFERENT
NATIONS OF EUROPE.

BY
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AN ADDRESS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL
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AN ADDRESS, ETC.

LIKE some of my predecessors, I have found considerable difficulty in selecting a subject on which to offer a few observations to the Union. But there are some topics, as it were, in the air. They importunately press themselves upon you, so that it is difficult to escape from them. One of these is the question to one aspect of which I wish for a short time to direct your attention—that of the relations of the civil and spiritual powers. I have no intention to discuss it with any immediate reference to our own controversies at home. That has been recently done by two members of this Union in a manner so masterly and exhaustive that it would be sheer presumption for anyone to follow them in that field. But I have thought it might be of use to cast our eye on what is going on in other countries, so as to enlarge our minds to some just conception of the might and magnitude of this great conflict, which is agitating all nations, perplexing all governments, and threatening in some countries to give rise to disastrous civil strife, if indeed it may not beget a recurrence of those religious wars, which we had fondly hoped had for ever passed away, from the possibilities of future European history:

Foreigners sometimes say that we are apt to be a little insular in our sentiments and sympathies, as well as in our geographical position. A distinguished Italian gentleman once said to me, "Not only is England an island, but every Englishman is an island surrounded by a little moat of partial views, and of exclusive national prejudices and pre-occupations, which renders it difficult to find access to him, so as to make him understand, and feel an interest in, what is going on in other countries." This, of course, was a humorous exaggeration, but yet, perhaps, not without some foundation in fact. Take this question as an example. There are many of the less intelligent of our worthy friends of the Church of England, who are trying to persuade themselves that the agitation which is troubling their own peace is only a kind of tempest in a tea-cup, stirred up by "fierce and acrimonious political Dissenters," who are moved principally by envy at the present happy condition of the Established Church. They do not seem to be aware that there is a great tidal wave of opinion sweeping over the face of the world, and rushing strongly against civil establishments of religion, as the only means of escape to nations from the terrible evils at which I have already glanced; and I cannot but think that it would give enlargement and elevation to *our* aims who in this country are urging that movement onward—not, I dare say, without some mixture of human infirmity in our views and motives, but on the whole, as I devoutly believe, from a full conviction that we are doing the work of God—to feel that if we succeed, as we hope to do, in finding a solution for this great problem, which shall ultimately redound to the advantage of both Church and State, we shall be giving help and hope to millions of our fellow-men and fellow-Christians who are elsewhere battling with the same difficulty.

There are three relations on which it is possible that Church and State can co-exist in the same country—either that the Church should rule the State, or that the State should rule the Church, or that Church and State, recognising and acknowledging that they exercise dominion over different provinces, should, on perfectly friendly terms, agree to separate and to keep apart, each keeping within its own domain and minding its own business. No doubt there are points where the two jurisdictions meet and intersect each other, and may come into conflict. But when each of the two powers relinquishes the pretension of interfering in what is obviously and admittedly the sphere of the other, no insurmountable difficulty has been found, as is abundantly illustrated by the experience of the United States and the British Colonies, in adjusting those points so as to avoid all breach of social and political harmony. We are accustomed to speak lightly of Gallio, because “he cared for none of these things,” and of course his motive was not very worthy or exalted. But it has always seemed to me that he has laid down the sound principle for the guidance of a magistrate. When the Jews dragged Paul before him, with the cry, “This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law,” he answered, “If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you ; but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters.”

We shall find from the survey which I am about to take of the state of matters in several Continental countries, that the difficulty arises from the attempt to maintain some sort of union, alliance, or concordat between Church and State which leads to a fierce, internecine, never-ending scramble for the supremacy. Of course we must recognise the fact that

the exorbitant pretensions of the Papacy, as formulated so audaciously in the Encyclical, the Syllabus, and the Vatican decrees, immensely aggravate and complicate the problem in all Catholic countries, and indeed more or less in all countries, where there is an Established Church. But for this also there seems to me no possible remedy but in the absolute severance of the two powers; with this distinct reservation, however, that in drawing the line of demarcation the State shall keep in its own domain the education of the people. Let us first look at our nearest neighbour, France.

FRANCE.

The present relations of the Church and State in France are founded on the Concordat made between Napoleon I. and Pope Pius VII. in 1801. In the wild tumult of the Revolution, the Church, whose enormous corruptions had contributed largely to bring about that fierce political cyclone, was for a time swept clean away. Divine service was forbidden, the churches were closed, the worship of the *Être Suprême* was decreed by authority, and the priests were exposed to the most atrocious and pitiless persecutions. But this also was done in pursuance of the principle, that the State has a right to regulate all matters of religion. The Free-thinkers whose writings had prepared the Revolution, like their brethren Hobbes and Bolingbroke in England, and their successors Strauss and his followers in modern Germany, were no friends of religious liberty. They asserted, as broadly as Bossuet had done, the right of the sovereign authority to prescribe to men what they should believe, and to punish them for disbelief. "There is a profession of faith," says Rousseau, in his *Contrat Social*, "which is purely civil, the articles of which the sovereign has a right to fix, without having the power to oblige anyone to believe

them. But he can banish from the State whoever does not believe them. . . . If anyone, after having publicly recognised these dogmas, conducts himself as if not believing them, let him be punished with death; he has committed the greatest of crimes, he has lied before the laws." Voltaire, writing to the Russian minister Schouvaloff in 1768, says: "The Catholic Princes begin a little to reform the encroachments of superstition; but instead of cutting off the head of the hydra, they are content with merely biting its tail. They are not yet bold enough to declare that the Church ought absolutely to depend upon the sovereign. It is only your illustrious sovereign that is right. He pays the priests; he opens their mouths and he shuts them; they are at his command, and everything is tranquil." It was, by virtue, therefore, of precisely the same principle, the right of the magistrate to enforce his will in religious matters, that the Roman Catholic priests were banished to Cayenne, or sent out in hulks to perish at sea, for refusing to conform to the worship of the *Être Suprême* under the Convention, which under Louis XIV., drove hundreds of thousands of Protestants from France, or condemned those who remained to death, for not conforming to the Roman Catholic religion.

When Napoleon was established in supreme power, there was a great opportunity to give religious liberty to France on sure and firm foundations. Lafayette counselled him to accept in its integrity the American principle of perfect equality between all forms of worship, each of them remaining separate from the State; all religious societies constituting themselves according to their own inclination, under the direction of clergy chosen and paid by themselves. But Napoleon was not a man to give liberty to anybody or anything. His answer was: "The Catholic religion dominates

France ; besides, I have need of the Pope, and he shall do what I will."

The whole history of this Concordat is a bitter burlesque on the prophetic ideal, so great a favourite with some defenders of establishments, of kings being nursing-fathers to the Church. Napoleon had no religion, and pretended to have none. For although, when it served his purpose, he could administer nauseous flatteries to the clergy, he never scrupled to make the most cynical avowal of his utter contempt for Christianity, save as an instrument in the hands of the priests to subserve his own despotic rule. "I do not see in religion," he said, "the mystery of the incarnation, but the mystery of social order ; it attaches to heaven an idea of equality which prevents the rich from being massacred by the poor. Religion is a sort of inoculation or vaccine, which in satisfying our love of the marvellous protects us against charlatans and sorcerers ; the priests are better than Cagliostro and Kant, and all the dreamers of Germany." On another occasion he said : "There must be a religion for the people, and that religion must be in the hand of the Government. . . . The First Consul nominates a hundred bishops, the Pope institutes them ; they nominate the parish priests, the State pays them. They take the oath. Those who won't submit are transported. It will be said that I am a Papist ; I am nothing. I was a Mahommedan in Egypt ; I shall be a Catholic here for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions, but I retain the idea of God"—and, lifting his hand to heaven, he exclaimed—"who made all this." As has been said, as truly as wittily, Napoleon found in the Gospel only two commandments—obey the Emperor, and accomplish your military service ; this is the law and the prophets. And this was the nursing father of the Roman Catholic Church !

After long negotiations, conducted with infinite cunning and intrigue on both sides, the Pope was induced, partly by bullying and partly by coaxing, to accept the Concordat. These were its principal articles.

The free exercise in France of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman religion is assured, but subject to such police regulations as the Government may judge necessary for the public tranquillity. The First Consul is to nominate the Archbishops and Bishops, and the Pope was to confer upon them canonical institution. The bishops are to nominate the parish priests, but their choice must only fall upon those of whom the Government approves. The bishops are to swear obedience and fidelity to the Government. "I promise also," the oath goes on to say, "to have no intelligence of, or to assist at any council, or to take part in any association, whether domestic or foreign, which shall be contrary to the public tranquillity, and if in my diocese or elsewhere, I learn that there is any plot going on to the prejudice of the State, that I shall make it known to the Government;" which sounds very much like making the Bishops spies and informers for the Government.

But besides the Concordat, there was a series of Organic Articles promulgated by Napoleon, of his own mere will, ostensibly to explain and to give effect to the Concordat, but which brought the Church into a state of much more complete subjection to the civil power. According to these ordinances, no bull, brief, rescript, decree, mandate, or other document issuing from the Court of Rome could be received, published, or printed, without the authorisation of the Government. No individual calling himself nuncio, legate, or vicar-apostolic could, without the same authorisation, exercise on French soil, any functions relative to the Gallican Church. The decrees of foreign synods,

even those of general councils, could not be published in France before the Government had examined them, and been satisfied that they were consistent with the public tranquillity. No council or synod, national or metropolitan, or any deliberative assembly, could be held without the permission of the Government. All ecclesiastical functions were to be gratuitous, except such fees as were fixed by the regulations. There is an appeal to the Council of State in the case of abuse on the part of superiors or other ecclesiastical persons. Archbishops and bishops might add to their name the title of Citizen or Mister, but all other titles are forbidden. The bishops must reside in their own dioceses; they could not absent themselves without the permission of the Chief Consul. Those who should be chosen to give instruction in the seminaries must subscribe the declaration made by the clergy of France in 1682. The parish priests were to take the oath from the hand of the Prefect; they were not in their instructions or sermons to make any attack, direct or indirect, on the persons or the religious worship of others. In towns where there were churches belonging to other persuasions, no religious ceremony was allowed to take place outside the walls of Catholic churches. There were a great many other regulations prescribing and controlling to the minutest details everything connected with the organisation and administration of the Church. The Pope rebelled against these Articles, and proclaimed his disapproval in an Allocution of May, 1802; but he did not dare to declare them invalid.

All this did not prevent the French clergy from joining in a chorus of fulsome adulation of Napoleon, and making themselves the most servile instruments of his will. Well does M. de Pressensé say: "I know no reading more sad than that of the ecclesiastical documents of that time. We find

there a profanation of sacred things which would have dishonoured the Church of the Lower Empire.* Napoleon was proclaimed as the restorer of religion, the servant of God, the new Cyrus, the new Constantine, the new Charlemagne. "He," said the Pope's Legate, "has carried the divine ark across the Jordan." The clergy received him on the threshold of the churches chanting the words, "Behold, I send my messenger, who shall prepare my way before me." When the war broke forth against England, the pulpits resounded with fierce denunciations of *la perfide Albion*; it was compared to Tyre and Sidon, and the maledictions of the prophets were poured upon it in inexhaustible abundance. The bulletins of the Grand Army were read from the pulpit as sermons. When the country began to revolt against the successive levies of conscripts by which the Emperor was depopulating the nation to carry on his wars of aggression and conquest, he demanded of the Bishops to aid the Prefects in bringing the refractory to obedience; and the priests often supplemented the police in this sad office. The ecclesiastical authorities approved and taught in all the churches throughout France the famous Imperial catechism, which was, indeed, specially recommended in a formal decree by Caprera, the Pope's Legate, to be used in the dioceses. The following questions and answers furnish a sufficient sample of that precious preparation of milk for babes:—

"Q. What are the duties of Christians towards the Princes who govern them, and what in particular are our duties towards Napoleon I., our Emperor?

"A. Christians owe to the Princes who govern them, and we in particular to Napoleon I., our Emperor, love,

* L'Eglise et la Révolution Française, p. 439.

respect, obedience, fidelity, military service, and the necessary taxes for the maintenance and expense of the empire and the throne. . . . To honour and serve our Emperor is to honour and serve God Himself.

“Q. What ought we to think of those who fail in their duty towards our Emperor?

“A. According to the Apostle Paul, they resist the ordinance established by God Himself, and render themselves worthy of eternal damnation.”

Such is the bitter bread of humiliation which those have to eat who, for the sake of gaining worldly advantage to their Church, are content to become the instruments of a despot's will. No doubt the Roman Catholic Church had been restored by Napoleon to much of its former outward splendour. It was surrounded with all the pomp and paraphernalia of official distinction. To use Burke's magniloquent phrase, it was again lifting up its mitred front in courts and parliaments. But at what cost! Better than this the Church in the desert; better the Pilgrim Fathers landing on the naked Plymouth rock without succour or hope, save the sublime consciousness that they were holding fast their fidelity to their great Master in heaven; better the Scotch Covenanters, seeking refuge among the fastnesses of their native hills from the swords of Claverhouse's dragoons; yes, better to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth, better than to be clothed in purple and linen, and to fare sumptuously every day, on condition of prostituting the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus into an accomplice of the most degrading and disastrous despotism that ever cursed the earth.

But, in his eagerness to establish his own absolute power over Church as well as State, Napoleon overreached him-

self, and, in fact, did more than any other man to prepare for the Ultramontane movement that has since made such progress in France. He was determined, in the first place, to make a clean sweep of the old bishops, as being, in his apprehension, too favourable to the ancient royal *régime*, which he wanted to supersede. He insisted, therefore, that the Pope should order them to resign, and if they refused, to declare their sees vacant, and confer canonical institution upon bishops appointed by himself. The Pope struggled against this for a long time, until the more astute of his counsellors, seeing the immense significance of the principle involved in the demand, said to him: "Let us conclude the Concordat which he desires; when it is ratified its incalculable religious importance will be recognised, for it gives to Rome the power over the episcopate throughout the world." But there was another provision introduced into the Concordat. It was thought that a considerable number of the lower clergy cherished patriotic and Liberal sympathies. As a check upon them a power of dismissal was given to the bishops, and thus 20,000 incumbents were made to hold their office at the pleasure of their bishops, and were placed virtually in a position of dependence upon them. By this arrangement a deadly blow was directed against the ancient liberties of the Gallican Church. The bishops hold their jurisdiction from the Pope, and the clergy are in the power of the bishops, and thus the Church is bound by a chain, the last link of which is fastened to the Papal throne. I have no time to trace the history of the relations between Church and State in France under the Bourbons, Louis Philippe, and Napoleon III. Suffice it to say that the clerical party has become more and more Ultramontane. All other considerations are subordinated to the maintenance of the Papal Supremacy. A flagrant illustration of this was

afforded immediately after the close of the Franco-German war—itself, it is believed, in no small degree owing to the influence of this party. A few weeks after the signature of the peace, while France was lying panting and exhausted after that tremendous conflict, and bleeding at every pore, a vast system of petitioning was organised by the bishops, demanding an intervention in favour of the temporal power of the Pope: This meant, first, diplomatic rupture, and then avowed hostility, with Italy. So that at the very time when French soil was yet in occupation of foreign arms, and the whole country was reeling and staggering beneath the enormous burdens imposed upon it, these fanatics were trying to push the Government into a course which would inevitably have involved the nation in another war. “What does it matter to the Ultramontanes?” says M. de Pressensé; “what is the country and its pitiful interests compared with the Pontifical suzerainty?” *

They are still pursuing the same course. Stimulated by the last Papal Allocution, they have been promoting a violent agitation throughout France with a view to compel the Government to interpose for the restoration of the Pope to his temporal sovereignty. A short time ago, the Bishop of Nevers addressed a letter direct to the Mayors of the Nièvre, in which he says: “The Pope being no longer free in Rome, the result is that we ourselves are no longer free in our consciences, and we consequently ought to use all our influence to obtain a change in such an abnormal state of things, and the restoration to the Sovereign of our souls the independence which he absolutely requires in order to guide us. We must first instil these views in the minds of the population whose interests are confided to us.

* *La Liberté Religieuse en Europe*, p. 118.

We must then concert together to cause similar convictions to prevail in the various councils of the country."

It is to be hoped that the vigorous resolution passed on Thursday last by an overwhelming majority in the Legislative Chamber, under the inspiration of M. Gambetta's powerful eloquence, will effectually extinguish this audacious and dangerous agitation.

The present condition of the established *Protestant* Church in France is also full of mournful significance and instruction. But this has lately been so fully expounded by M. de Pressensé in a series of letters to one of our religious papers that it is not necessary for me to dwell upon it. But there is hope also for France. The cause of the spiritual independence of the Church has been, and is, pledged on the highest grounds and with consummate ability by a number of men, whose writings cannot fail to exercise a large influence over their countrymen. It is enough in this connection to mention the names Vinet, Laboulaye, and Pressensé. And M. Laboulaye told me a few years ago, that he has never known any question grow so rapidly in France as that of the separation of Church and State.

GERMANY.

Let us now turn for a moment from France to Germany.

Up to 1870 the relations between Germany and the Roman Catholic Church were complacent, if not cordial. The zealous friends of the former were disposed to cherish sanguine expectations that Prince Bismarck, when the French war had been concluded, would make himself the champion of the restoration of the temporal power of the Pope. It is not unlikely that that astute and unscrupulous statesman had for a while played with their hopes in this respect. But by that time the Œcumenical Council* had proclaimed the

Infallibility of the Pope, and it is impossible to believe that the great German statesman did not clearly foresee that "from the day on which that doctrine was proclaimed with the consent or tacit connivance of the Episcopate, the Governments, as the representatives of the modern political and national interests, would find themselves attacked by the Roman Church." * It is clear, also that he was impelled to the legislative crusade against the Church by political apprehensions. Speaking in the House of Peers in 1872 he said:—

"If I must declare to you all my thoughts, I will avow that I do not for an instant doubt that the revenge desired in France is to be prepared by religious complications in Germany. They wish to paralyse German unity. An influential part of the Catholic clergy, directed from Rome, even subserves French policy, because with that they connect their efforts for the restoration of the States of the Church. It is thus they hope to strengthen themselves, while in Germany the clergy, receiving their orders from Paris, from Rome, from Geneva, from Brussels, will foment ecclesiastical complications. At the same time that revenge is prepared against Germany, a blow is prepared against Italy. It is hoped that religious discords will paralyse Germany, and while in this country the clergy are silently doing their work, they openly raise the French flag in Italy, and endeavour to bring back the country under the authority of the Pope, or rather under French authority represented by the Pope."

But, whatever were his motives, Prince Bismarck entered upon the conflict with characteristic boldness and thoroughness. I cannot attempt to give here any sketch of the

* These were the words of Count Arnim : Geffcken, ii. 332.

famous Falk laws. Some of them we cannot hesitate to approve and applaud, as friends of religious liberty: the law on civil marriages, for instance; the law of secession which allows converts to change their religion without incurring civil penalties; the law which takes education from the control of the clergy, by making all educational institutions subject to inspection of authorities appointed by the State, together with such provisions as protect a citizen from suffering detriment in property, person, or reputation from acts of ecclesiastical censure or discipline. But some of them are of much more questionable character, and it behoves us as Protestant Dissenters to be jealously on our guard against giving the sanction of our approval to acts which violate the principles of religious liberty, because they are directed against our theological and ecclesiastical adversaries, or even against those who do not scruple to become persecutors when they have the opportunity.

But I can refer those who wish to study all that can be said *pro and con*. in regard to these laws from our point of view, to two masterly essays, by two friends of ours, both of whom are equally unimpeachable in their attachment to the rights of conscience. Mr. Paton, in his most able and exhaustive article in the *Fortnightly Review* of March, 1875, without undertaking the absolute defence of the Falk legislation from the pure abstract principles of religious liberty, has furnished a very plausible justification of them as measures of compromise and transition, in the present peculiar condition of the German Empire. On the other hand, M. de Pressensé, in a singularly powerful article which appeared in the *Revue de Deux Mondes*, and is republished in his admirable volume entitled *La Liberté Religieuse en Europe*, has assailed them with great vehemence as adopting

the very weapons of the Syllabus to fight the Roman Catholic Church. "The saddest thing," he says, "is, that opinion has gone astray in those countries which, like England, are the classic lands of religious liberty. The religious policy of the German Empire has received there felicitations which we must be allowed to call scandalous. We know that the English Parliament would not allow even to be brought into discussion any one of the laws proposed at Berlin; but we ought not to approve that which we are not willing to do. We ought now more than ever to raise ourselves above sectarian passions, and to say to ourselves that the persecution which strikes our religious adversary, strikes that which is our common possession, and our sole guarantee in the conflict of ideas and beliefs—I mean liberty of conscience."* For my own part, I am bound to say, that some of these laws do seem to go beyond the true limits of the civil power, and to infringe on essential rights which must belong to any Christian Church. The fact is that Prince Bismarck, according to his own boast, is a man of blood and iron, and, like some other statesmen whom we have known nearer home, has committed the error of not taking into account the great spiritual forces that are at work in society, and which cannot be controlled by such carnal weapons as Krupp's cannon or the Minie rifle, for they are "as the air invulnerable." Blood and iron cannot settle everything: indeed, in my opinion very few things can be settled satisfactorily and permanently by such agency. One thing, however, is becoming increasingly apparent, that, whatever be their merits or demerits, they are not successful. They have been applied with the remorseless severity which might be expected from the iron will of the Imperial Chancellor. In one month—that of March, 1874—there

* *La Liberté Religieuse en Europe*, p. 151.

were eighty or ninety convictions under the Ecclesiastical Laws—five of them bishops, sentenced to fine and imprisonment. In the diocese of Posen alone, there were in that month thirty-nine priests sent to prison.* But there are no signs of yielding. These laws have been defended on the ground that they were in fact passed in the interests of the lay members and inferior clergy of the Roman Catholic Church itself. But the laity and clergy won't have them, but are as resolute in their resistance as the Bishops themselves. The Chapters refuse to elect bishops in place of those deposed by the State. By a law of April, 1875, it was enacted that all State grants to the episcopate, the institutions connected with the bishoprics, and the clergy of the archbishoprics of Cologne, Gnesen, and Posen; of the bishoprics of Kulm, Ermeland, Breslau, Hildesheim, Osnabruck, Paderborn, Münster, Treves, Fulda, of the delegated districts of those dioceses, as well as of the Prussian parts of the archbishoprics of Prague, Olmutz, Freiburg, and of the the diocese of Mayence, will cease from the day of the publication of this law. What was the result? The subvention of the State was about a million of thalers a year; this gap was immediately filled by voluntary contributions, and the law missed its object.† And here, perhaps, there is a gleam of light as to the ultimate solution of this perplexing problem. Already in 1873, M. Windhorst, the eloquent leader of the clerical party in the German Chamber, declared that in preference to this crafty legislation, which kills the Church not by the sword but by slow poison, he did not hesitate to declare that he and his friends demanded the free American

* Mr. Alexander Taylor Innes, in *Contemporary Review* of October, 1875.

† Gessicken's Church and State, vol. ii. p. 321.

*régime.** And if the State goes on gradually disestablishing and disendowing the Church after the manner of the law of 1875, which I have cited, and the faithful come forward to supply the funds by voluntary contributions, who can tell but we may live to see a free Roman Catholic Church in the midst of the Evangelical empire?

Meanwhile the condition of the Protestant Church in Germany is utterly deplorable. It has come to be regarded so much as a mere piece of State mechanism, that it has lost all power and vitality as a Christian institution. The spread of rationalistic or latitudinarian views among the more educated classes is bad enough, but still worse seems to me the complete divorce between the Church and the great body of the people. The author of a work entitled "Religious Thought in Germany," which consists in great part of letters which appeared in the *Times* from their Berlin Correspondent, himself a German and a Prussian, describes the state of things thus: "The vast majority of the Protestant middle classes, and even a large portion of the lower strata of society, are estranged from the religion of their ancestors, and take no interest in the Church or the religious lessons thrust upon the schools, by Church and Government combined." They never go to church. Out of a Protestant population in Dresden of over 150,000, only six or seven thousand attend public worship on the Lord's-day. Why is this? One reason, and probably the main reason is, that the State has taken religion entirely out of the hands of the people into its own. They are drilled into religious observance as they are drilled into military discipline. The ministers are to them mere Government officials, paid to do a certain work at a prescribed rate. "The

* *La Liberté Religieuse en Europe*, p. 200.

Protestant clergy," says an American minister, who had long lived in Germany, "instead of being looked upon with respect by the people, as in England and America, are here resented with contempt as a sort of spiritual policemen or religious scavengers. They do no pastoral visiting, and, unless eloquent in the pulpit, have no influence in the community. They are upheld simply by the power of the State." Another witness says: "The office of clergyman is never sought by the higher classes; these men are looked upon as a body belonging to the community, who are to preach sermons, baptize, marry, confirm, and administer the sacraments, all of which are matters of pounds, shillings, and pence. You barter whether you will have a first-class wedding or a common one. If the former, the church produces velvet cushions; if the latter, straw-bottomed chairs. Your child must be christened when six years old—this is the law; a dollar a week can defer it at pleasure. At the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, each member brings his offering and lays it on the altar; this becomes the emolument of the pastor, who quietly pockets it during the holy office." | Such are the fruits of the State Church and the State School in Germany. What is the remedy? It is hard to say. A clergyman of the Church of England, who has resided for several years in that country, says: "Germany suffers much from the want of free Dissenting Churches alongside of the State Church. He adds, that "inasmuch as the relation in which the Church stands to the State has been a hindrance in the great Fatherland to free Evangelical action, a feeling in favour of the separation of Church and State has sprung up even in Evangelical circles. There is

* I believe compulsory baptism is now abolished.

† Religious Thought in Germany, p. 300.

also a growing feeling among the Liberal party in favour of Disestablishment; and I believe, that so far from such a course endangering the real interests of the Church in Germany, it would lead to an outburst of evangelical zeal, which would surprise many who look upon Germany as a land of infidels, which it decidedly is not." *

AUSTRIA.

Now we will turn to the condition of things in Austria. It is not many years since Austria was justly regarded as, next to Spain, the most absolute in its subjection to the Church of Rome of all the countries of Europe. The Concordat concluded between the Pope and the Emperor Francis Joseph, in 1854, furnishes a signal illustration of the daring extent to which the Church of Rome will carry its pretensions when it is allowed to indulge them without any restraint. All the most precious rights of the nation are placed absolutely at the feet of the Papacy. It begins with this sweeping declaration:—

"The Roman Pontiff having, by Divine right over the whole extent of the Church, the primacy of honour and jurisdiction, mutual communication with the Holy See in all that touches spiritual affairs and ecclesiastical affairs of the bishops, the clergy, and the people, shall not be subject to the necessity of obtaining the royal *placet*, but shall be entirely free."

This means that the Government should have no power to interdict the publication of the most dangerous Briefs from the Pope, even though they contained, as the Briefs of the Pope have often done, provocation to revolt against its

* Religious Thought in Germany, p. 292.

own authority. The other provisions of the Concordat, stated briefly, were these: "Education is placed under the direction of the bishops, not only in Government institutions but in private institutions also. The clergy are absolute masters of all the public schools. The bishops are invested with the right to watch over the press in all its manifestations, and thus the imperial censorship is placed at the service of the *Index*. All that concerns marriage is abandoned to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Marriage with religious rites, and consequently the preliminary confession, is made obligatory. All matrimonial matters are judged according to the Canon Law. Mixed marriages must, without exception, be concluded to the detriment of the non-Catholic party, who must allow all his or her children to be brought up in the Catholic faith. The clergy are delivered without defence to the power of the bishops in all that is not a crime by the common law, and the State lends its authority for the execution of all the penalties they may pronounce. The high dignitaries of the Church can never be brought before the tribunals of the country. The absolute right of the Church over all its temporalities is recognised with all its consequences, the civil power declining to limit or inspect it in any way, so that there is nothing to prevent the the whole country becoming one immense mortmain in the hands of the priesthood. In fact the Concordat of 1855, as has been well said, "was merely the translation into diplomatic language of the Encyclical of Pius IX." * Such was the state of things in Austria under the despotic régime, when the will of the Emperor was everything and the voice of the country was nothing. But after the overwhelming defeat of Sadowa the nation seemed suddenly to awake out

* Pressensé, *La Liberté Religieuse en Europe*, pp. 229—231.

of sleep. There is nothing more remarkable, and nothing more admirable, in the modern history of Europe than the way in which the Austrian nation, like Sampson bursting asunder the green withes of the Philistines, shook itself free from the feudo-clerical domination which it began to feel was strangling its civil and political life. It is curious that the first signal of this revolt was given by the teachers in the national schools. In 1867 a general congress of teachers, numbering 2,000 members, was held at Vienna, when a resolution was passed unanimously to this effect: "That the primary school in Austria is not what it ought to be, and that the schoolmaster cannot properly fulfil his high mission unless he is withdrawn from under the domination of the Church."* Then, under the ministry of Count Beust, Parliamentary rule and responsible government were for the first time established in Austria, and they went to work with a combined vigour and moderation that were altogether admirable. When the Reichsrath or Parliament met in May, 1867, there were two bills laid before it on the Church question, one by Dr. Muhlfield, cancelling all relations between Church and State, the other by Dr. Herbst, the present Minister of Justice, less sweeping but at that time perhaps more practicable, termed the "Confessional Laws." Some of these may be briefly summarised. Matrimonial causes were taken away from the ecclesiastical judges and submitted to the civil courts. Civil marriage was recognised as valid. The law of mixed marriages was so far changed, that the sons were to follow the religion of the father and the daughters that of the mother. Conversions from one religion to another were declared free. The cemeteries were no longer to be closed to Dissenters. Ab-

* Laveleye, *Instruction du Peuple*, p. 171.

stinence from labour on week-days which were festivals of the Church, was no longer obligatory. But the most important change was in the education laws. The schools were placed in the hands of the laity; the religious instruction, which was not compulsory, was left to the care of the Churches or religious societies to which the children or their parents belong. Indeed Baron Worms, in the able work in which he commemorates the recent changes in Austrian legislation, thinks he can best explain the character of the school law, by citing the clauses proposed by the Birmingham League, in their original scheme, on the question of secular and religious education, as possessing a striking similarity with that passed by the Austrian Parliament.* The Bishops were furious. The Papal Nuncio presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs a formal protest against the above laws. A Papal Allocution denouncing them followed in due course. But it was all to no purpose. The Austrian Government and people went on their way unheeding, nor did they stop there. The decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870 were met by further liberal legislation. The Concordat of 1855 was abolished. A new series of laws was passed, regulating the appointment to ecclesiastical offices, over which the State retains a veto; requiring the submission of episcopal mandates to the Government; placing ecclesiastical properties and foundations under the supervision of the civil authority; deciding the conditions on which other religious communities may exist, and other matters which we cannot particularise. It is, in fact, an elaborate attempt to define and regulate the limits and relations of Church and State as two distinct and independent powers, existing still in a certain connection the one

* Baron Worms, *The Austro-Hungarian Empire*, pp. 137-8.

with the other. But in these circumstances it is impossible to draw any clear and precise line of demarcation between the two, and the Austrian Government, though acting with commendable judgment and moderation, will find that it has entered on a path on which it will find new and inextricable difficulties rising before it. At this very moment we read of a great general congress of Austrian Catholics meeting at Vienna, evidently to renew the agitation on questions in dispute between them and the State. The words of the President, Count Egbert Belesidi, indicate the kind of divided allegiance between which they are trying to hold an equivocal position: "Firmly standing," he said, "by the Emperor and the State, let us closely rally round the Bishops and the Pope."

ITALY.

Italy has tried a solution of its own of the problem of reconciling the conflicting pretensions of the civil and spiritual power. It started from the celebrated maxim of Count Cavour: "A free Church in a free State." When the Government of Italy in 1870 took possession of Rome as the capital of the new kingdom, and of necessity deposed the Pope from his temporal dominion, they passed a series of laws known as the Laws of Guarantee, conferring upon the Pontiff and the Church rights and privileges which seem to us at first sight to be of extravagant generosity. They were meant, no doubt, to conciliate the Pope and the Curia. But so far as that was concerned it was labour lost. The answer of his Holiness, conveyed through Cardinal Antonelli, was this: "The very concession of guarantees; is it not a proof that they wish to impose laws upon us—upon us, who have been established by God as inter-

preter of all law, human and divine?" We need not dwell upon the first part of these laws, which relate to the personal rights and prerogatives of the Pope, which are of great amplitude. But those which treat of the general relations of the Church and State are of more interest to us. Here are some of them:—The Pope is allowed to correspond freely with the Episcopate and the whole Catholic Church without obstruction from the Government. No cardinal or other ecclesiastic shall be responsible for any ecclesiastical act performed in Rome having reference to the functions of the Holy See. The civil power does not interfere with the full exercise by the Pope of his authority and spiritual jurisdiction and disciplinary powers, and consequently every appeal to the temporal power in matters ecclesiastical is abolished. The Government renounces the right of nomination or presentation in the grant of the major Church appointments throughout the kingdom. The royal *exequatur* and *placet*, and every form of Government assent to the publication and execution of the acts of ecclesiastical authority, are abolished. The bishops are not required to take the oath of allegiance to the king. Some think these concessions were far too liberal. Mr. Gladstone especially very strongly objects to the absolute surrender of the right of episcopal nomination and appointment to the Pope. He says that up to the passing of these laws the civil power in all the States of Italy now included in the new kingdom, enjoyed either the right to nominate the bishops for the Pope's approval, or the right to refuse and exclude them by withdrawing the *exequatur*.* Mr. Gladstone, regarding the State as trustee of the rights of the laity and the lower clergy as against the hierarchy, thinks

* "Italy and her Church," in *Church Quarterly Review* for Oct. 1875.

this abandonment of the power of nomination and appointment, as a grave though unintentional breach of trust.

The Italian Government, however, has not in fact surrendered so completely as might appear at first sight, its control over ecclesiastical action. While relinquishing all right of interference in the appointments to all the higher offices of the Church, and even absolving the Bishops from the oath of allegiance, it retains its power over the temporalities of the Church; for the Statute of Guarantee, which expressly declares that the royal and every other form of governmental assent to acts of ecclesiastical authority are abolished, adds this significant provision, that all acts of the same authority which have regard to ecclesiastical goods or temporalities *remain subject* to the royal *exequatur* or *placet*. In truth there was, on the part of the Italian Government, as I have already intimated, a novel and very ingenious attempt to meet the difficulty as to the relation of Church and State, which has puzzled, and is puzzling, so many European statesmen. While giving what appears unbounded liberty to the Church within the spiritual sphere, it imposes the strictest restraint upon it in the civil sphere. To use the words of Mr. A. T. Innes, "It leaves the Church free in the Church region, even when its proceedings are condemned and held invalid by the State; but maintains also the freedom of the State in *its* region, to deny all civil effects and results to such ecclesiastical proceedings, as well as to enforce in that civil region all its own laws, however these may be condemned by the Church or its head."* In regard to episcopal appointment, for instance, the law, if I understand it aright, says to the Pope, "Oh yes, you may nominate whom you like to the spiritual office; we ask no

right of assent and exercise no veto; but we hold power over the revenues of the see, and in order to enjoy these, he must come to us, and obtain our approval, and if we don't like him we shall refuse him possession of those revenues."

How does this system work? I am afraid not quite satisfactorily. For one thing, up to quite recently the Government shrank from boldly and consistently carrying out its own laws. Under the Statute of Guarantee, as I have already explained, the Bishops in order to enjoy their episcopal incomes must have the *exequatur* of the State. To obtain that, they must present the original *bull* of their nomination. The demand must be made by the vicars or the syndics of the towns in which the Bishops have their dioceses. But this was not enforced. According to the statement of Signor Minghetti, the late Prime Minister of Italy, it would appear that since the law of guarantees was promulgated, fifty-six bishops have been allowed to enter on the government of their dioceses without any but a Papal title, and without taking the smallest notice either of State, clergy, or people; and they have been further allowed to nominate parish priests, to whom the Government has given its *placet*, and who have taken possession of the benefices in large numbers. There were constant complaints in the Italian Chamber, as to the laxity of the Government in the execution of these ecclesiastical laws. At last the Ministry of Signor Minghetti was defeated on this question, and when Parliament was dissolved an overwhelming majority was returned in support of the Government which succeeded, and which was pledged to deal with the aggressions of the clerical party: a pretty clear index of the state of public opinion in Italy. Immediately on his accession to office, Signor Mancini, the present Minister of Grace and Justice, insisted upon the stringent application of the law, which

required the royal *exequatur* before the Bishop designate could enter on the possession of the temporalities of his see. This firmness had its effect. The Pope, after having consulted the Congregation which regulates the nomination of the Bishops, has permitted them to apply to the Government and to present their *bulls*. In his last violent Allocution he grumbles dreadfully over this. But he has submitted, and as it is his first act of submission it is not without considerable significance. But this is not all. The new Government introduced another Bill, which is called the Clerical Abuses Bill. It provides that any clergyman who shall so abuse his office as to disturb the public conscience or the peace of families, shall be liable to imprisonment, varying from four months to two years, and to pay a fine of a thousand francs. It provides further that any clergyman who in the exercise of his public ministry shall censure or outrage the institutions and laws of the country, shall be liable to three months' imprisonment and a fine of a thousand francs. Moreover, if religious teachers incite the people to disobey the laws, or if they impede them in the exercise of their civil and political rights, they may be imprisoned or fined in a similar manner. And perhaps the sting of the law is this, as it evidently glances at the Pope himself, that those priests are liable to punishment who publish or diffuse writings having the same tendency, *from whatever ecclesiastical authority or from whatever place they may proceed.*

It cannot be denied that such provisions would appear to us in this country of rather dangerous elasticity, as involving a surveillance of the pulpit and of the press alien to our habits of free discussion. But we may safely assume that the men who are at the helm of affairs now in Italy, are men not likely needlessly or wantonly to cramp freedom of speech or printing. No better evidence of this can be

desired than the fact, that they have refused to interfere with the free circulation through the country of that bitter and intemperate Allocution of the Pope recently issued, in which he speaks of the Italian Government, under whose shadow he dwells in safety and honour, as "the usurping Government, treading under foot every divine and human right," and distinctly appeals to the Roman Catholic priesthood throughout Europe and the world, to rouse up their flocks to act on their respective governments, with a view to overturn the Italian constitution and to compel the Italian Government to reinstate him in the possession of his temporal dominion. A government which tolerates this cannot be an intolerant government.

We cannot judge of the necessity or expediency of such laws from an English point of view, because we have no conception of the extent to which a portion of the Roman clergy in Italy are using the power and opportunity of their office to harass and impede, and in fact to overthrow, the Government. By the kindness of Signor Pierantoni, a distinguished member of the Italian Parliament, and himself the reporter of the Committee to which this project of law was referred for consideration, I have received ample materials, out of which may be constructed, I think, a satisfactory justification of the Government and Parliament of Italy for introducing and passing these laws. I regret extremely that it is not possible within the compass of this Address to present even a summary of the statements and arguments by which they defend their own course. Perhaps one of our papers or publications will offer to me the hospitality of their pages for performing this task at some future time.

What adds to the complication in Italy is this. On the one hand foreign nations, or at least Germany, is beginning

to ask, rather ominously, how far the Italian Government must be held responsible for the protection of a power which, like the Pope and the Roman Curia, is doing its utmost to stir up sedition in other countries. On the other hand, that old man, standing on the verge of the grave, is using all his influence, by appeals to the Roman Catholic clergy, and by autograph letters to Roman Catholic princes, to bring all Catholic countries into hostility with Italy; for he seems to think it a small thing to wrap all Europe in the flames of a fierce religious war, if he may thereby be restored to the possession of his phantom temporal power in Rome.

There are, however, gleams of light from the action of the people themselves in Italy. About two years ago an event of great significance took place in one of the rural communes in Mantua. The Archbishop of that province is a violent Ultramontane, and the priest, Don Leonardi, who was ministering to the parishioners as a *locum tenens* until a regular incumbent should be appointed, not being to his mind, he removed him, and appointed another who shared his own views. The parishioners, resenting this intrusion, held a meeting, which was called with great formality, and by a vote of 207 to 47 elected Don Leonardi to be their priest. The Archbishop visited this contumacy by a thundering decree of excommunication, to which, however, the peasant parishioners turned a deaf ear. He promoted a suit in the civil court, demanding that Don Leonardi should be interdicted from exercising his functions as parish priest, and that he should be ejected from the church and the parsonage. But the civil court of Mantua declined to grant either of these demands, and in doing so, it laid down a principle of the gravest importance, which is, that *the ownership of the parish church belongs, not to the Catholic*

*Church as a whole, nor to the bishops, but to the civil communities, and its administration to the syndic and other local civic authorities until the vacant incumbency has been filled up.** It leaves Don Leonardi undisturbed in the possession of the church. But according to the judgment it pronounced in reference to a neighbouring parish which came before it under similar circumstances, while giving the church it refused to give the benefice to the priest elected by the parishioners. May we not here see the germ of a sort of Congregational Roman Catholic Church, the priest elected by the people and supported by their voluntary contributions? Mr. Gallenga (and few men know Italy better), in his work recently published called "*Italy Revisited*" attaches great importance to this movement. "Already," he says, "the old Duchy of Mantua begins to exhibit the phenomenon of a bishop without a diocese, and a diocese without a bishop; and what may not be the effect of so easy and so signal a victory of the people over a prelate in a country like Italy, where not only the mass of the laity but many thousands of the lower clergy are fretting against Papal and prelatie tyranny, and aspiring to a more liberal and equitable government of the Church?"† Indeed there seems to be an attempt going on at this moment to form a powerful association, under the title of the "*Society for the Revindication of the Rights of the Christian People*," for the purpose of demanding "the restoration to the clergy and people of the right of electing their pastors of whatever rank in the hierarchy." To what extent this association has found favour in Italy, I have no means of ascertaining. But there are two facts which already indicate

Contemporary Review for Oct. 1875, p. 824.

† *Italy Revisited*, p. 327.

that it is regarded as representing a movement of considerable importance. One is that the late Government, through the mouth of its Minister of Police and Justice, expressed its sympathy with the views and aims on which it is founded. M. Vigliani told those who addressed him as representatives of the Society, very much as Mr. Gladstone told Mr. Miall, that their duty was "to mature public opinion, which must sooner or later produce its influence upon the deliberations of Parliament." * The other fact which testifies to the importance of this Association is this, that it has received the honour of special denunciation from the Papal authority, which has pronounced the major excommunication against all persons who are either members, promoters, adherents or favourers of the society.

SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland, in its resolve to resist the domination of the Church by the State, has rushed to the opposite extreme, by placing the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, in a condition of the most servile subjection to the State. Refusing to accept the simple principle, of the total separation of the two, the Liberals of that country are determined to *have* an Established Church, but under conditions which render impossible the maintenance of any system either of doctrine or discipline. In several of the cantons they have constituted what they call a democratic Church—that is, a Church absolutely dependent upon the suffrage of the citizens. Every citizen, Protestant or Catholic, registered as a tax-payer, is by right an elector for his Church, without any religious condition being exacted

* Mr. Innes' article in *Contemporary Review* of April, 1877, p. 861.

of him. Whether he be a Christian or a free-thinker, a devout man or an atheist, his right as a member of the Church is entire and inviolable. This constituency elects the minister and all the Church officers, so that there may be, and there are, the widest varieties of doctrinal teaching, and the bond of a common faith is utterly broken. And, to aggravate the folly and mischief, the priest and pastor are subject to re-election every six years. All creeds and liturgies are abolished. No Church discipline is possible, for the law forbids that any citizen should be subject to any punishment, even expulsion from the Church, on account of his religious or irreligious opinions. In other words, as Mr. Geffcken expresses it, "the main object was to compel religious communities to recognise those of their members who have practically renounced their communion." The consequence is, that both Catholics and Protestants have rebelled against this legislation. It is difficult to find priests who will submit to be so elected; and among serious Evangelical Protestants there has been a considerable secession, who have founded voluntary Churches of their own.

BELGIUM.

The condition of things in Belgium is very peculiar. When that country was separated from Holland and constituted into a distinct State, in 1830, the clergy and the Catholic party were, or affected to be, very liberal. The political Liberals therefore welcomed their co-operation, and, in the effusion of the moment, made great concessions to the Church. There are some who speak of there being in Belgium a separation of Church and State. But that separation consists of the absolute independence of the Church of the State, while the State provides endowments

and exclusive privileges for the Church. "The relations of the Church and State here," says a distinguished Belgian, in a private letter to me, "are officially very simple; the State pays the bishops nominated by Rome, and the priests nominated by the bishops." Among the concessions made to the Catholic party at the time referred to, the most fatal was this—that the education of the people was virtually surrendered into their hands. The national schools are under the absolute control of the clergy. For a time, while the Catholic clergy remained what they professed to be in 1830—liberal in their views—no serious harm was done. But when the great wave of Ultramontaniam began to flow over Europe, in no land did it set in so strongly as in Belgium; and then the priests turned to the utmost account the vantage-ground they had acquired by the Constitution of 1830. Education is unscrupulously used as an instrument for the promulgation of the doctrines of the Syllabus. Every considerable town has a newspaper under the direction of the Bishops. At the time of elections, and notably at the last election, the clergy from the pulpit denounced the Liberals as men void of morality and honour, who are aiming to destroy religion. The priests lead the peasantry to the poll like sheep, and voters who are known to support Liberal candidates are ruined in their worldly prospects.

But some good promises to arise out of the very extravagance of clerical tyranny. Many thoughtful men are beginning to feel that the influence which is to resist the Ultramontane power must be sought, not in the mere negation of religious belief, but in the adoption of a higher and purer form of Christianity. M. de Laveleye, the distinguished author, whose name and whose writings are known all over Europe, has advocated this view with great earnestness and

force. If, he says in effect, we are to wean the people from clerical dominion, and save the liberties of our country from being swamped, we must substitute something on which the heart and conscience of our countrymen can repose, in place of the servile superstitions we want to displace. That better something, he thinks, is Protestantism. In his able pamphlet, which was translated and published with an introduction by Mr. Gladstone, he sets himself to demonstrate, by a series of remarkable facts, how much in intelligence, morality, and freedom the Protestant nations surpass those that are Catholic. And he has himself given, or is about to give, an example of seceding from the Church of Rome. In a letter I received from him a few weeks ago he says: "At Brussels a considerable number of persons, almost all of them writers and professors, myself included, will in a short time make our adhesion to Protestantism."

But there are also some signs of a popular movement in the same direction. M. de Laveleye has called my attention to one remarkable case in a commune called Sart-Dame-Aveline, in the province of Brabant. In that parish there was a young curate who had made himself greatly beloved by the people by his preaching and devotion to his pastoral work. For some capricious reason his ecclesiastical superiors removed him from his charge. The people appealed to the Archbishop, who turned a deaf ear to their remonstrances. The consequence was that the parishioners almost in a body absented themselves from church, and continued to do so in spite of all efforts to bring them back. But feeling the need of some religious instruction, they applied to the Evangelical Society of Belgium to come to their help. After some hesitation that body sent one of their ministers to Sart-Dame-Aveline, where he found a

numerous and sympathetic audience. He continued thus to visit them for four months, and the result has been the formation of a Protestant congregation, consisting of several hundred souls, who after a while opened a subscription for the erection of a chapel, and, considering their poverty, raised a large sum for that purpose. M. de Laveleye, earnestly sympathising with these poor people, published an appeal on their behalf in one of the Belgian papers, which was generously responded to. He wrote to me to ask for some help in England, and I had the pleasure of sending him £45, raised among a few friends, members of Parliament, and others. The chapel has been built, and in the *Chretien Belge* of February there is a singularly interesting account of its opening: "The chapel," we are told, "is constructed to seat 300 persons, but there were nearly 700 present on that occasion. The women, the children, and the old men were seated, but the men, to the number of between 300 and 400, stood the whole time, closely packed, and attentive during the two hours that the services lasted." There is a debt on the chapel, and they are very anxious to build a house for a minister, as the presence of a pastor among them is deemed of great importance. If anyone here should feel disposed to assist in this work, I shall be happy to be the medium of transmitting these contributions to M. de Laveleye. I have cited this fact as an illustration of the hope I expressed that in Belgium and elsewhere the exorbitance of the pretensions of the Ultramontane priesthood may lead to a revolt among the people themselves who are subjected to their spiritual despotism.

I am sorry that I am not able to point out as fully as I could wish, the moral suggested by this brief survey of the

state of Europe. Surely it is obvious enough. May it not be expressed in this one sentence, *Let no man join together what God hath put asunder.*

Christianity was intended by its Divine founder to be a subtle spiritual force—"My words, they are spirit and they are life"—with a diffusing and penetrating power by which it could enter into and permeate human society, acting upon and assimilating it to its own nature, until it had leavened the whole lump. "Christianity," says M. de Tocqueville, "can exist under every government. This is an evidence of its truth. It never has been bound, and never will be bound, to any *form* of government or to the grandeur of any single nation. It can reign in the worst governments, and extract from the calamities which they inflict the occasion for admirable virtues." Yes, but that is only on condition that it does not become itself the slave and vassal of any government. But men, not satisfied to let it work thus as an independent spiritual influence, have sought to imprison it in gross material forms and institutions, and to place it under the protection of that brute force, the worship of which is still the religion of so many men and so many Christians, so that its Divine power is neutralised by coarse admixture with the beggarly elements of this world. And what is the result of this perverse resolve to counteract the Divine intention? Look around on all the countries of Europe and see the answer. What are the present results of the attempt to combine the temporal and spiritual power in close relations with each other? These are some of the results. It involves the Governments themselves in ceaseless trouble and embarrassment. It rends asunder the national unity in every country where it prevails. It caricatures Christianity before the face of the world, and drives men in shoals into irreligion and infidelity. It degrades

and dishonours the Church itself by making it a mere organ for sordid personal or corporate ambition.

What is it but burning ecclesiastical questions, questions arising from the conflict between Church and State, that disturb the peace and confound the policy of the foremost statesmen of France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium at this moment? This result, indeed, we should hardly deplore if we could only hope that the maze of perplexity in which they are involved, and from which they struggle in vain to escape, should force upon the crowned and epaulettéd theologians of Europe the tardy conviction, that in dealing with spiritual things they are dealing with things beyond their province and beyond their competency.

But a far graver effect of the system of State-Churchism is the way in which it converts religion into an element of discord, distracting and dividing the members of the same social and political community. Is it not so? Is there not a danger at this moment in more than one European country that ecclesiastical dissension should culminate into civil war? And that this does arise from the *system* which we condemn, from the conflict incessantly going on, between the Church trying to rule the State, and the State trying to rule the Church, is evident from the different condition of things which prevails in the United States of America, where both powers have renounced the right of sovereignty in the other's domain. In no country in the world is there more religious earnestness and activity. In no country in the world are there more, or so many, religious sects. In no country in the world does political passion and partisanship run to greater height. And yet we never hear there of the conflicting pretensions of rival sects coming in to exasperate political animosity by theological and ecclesiastical rancour. We never hear of questions pertaining to the doctrine and

discipline, the offices and ritual of a Christian Church being flung down on the floor of Congress as they are on the floor of the British Parliament, to be discussed and decided by an assembly consisting of men of all religions and of no religion; Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics. "Religious equality in the United States," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "may not be perfect unity, it may not be the height of culture or of grace, but at all events it is peace. . . . Saving in the case of Roman Catholicism, we cannot call to mind a single instance of a serious appeal in an election to sectarian feeling. Much as we have heard of the two candidates for the Presidency, we could not at this moment tell to what Church either of them belongs. Where no Church is privileged there can be no cause for jealousy. The Churches dwell side by side without disturbing the State with any quarrels; they are all alike loyal to the Government. . . . So far as we know, controversy between them is very rare; there is more of it *within* the several Churches between their own more orthodox and more liberal members. In none does it rage more violently than in the Episcopal Church, though under religious equality irreconcilable disagreement on religious questions leads to secession, not to mutual law-suits and imprisonments.'

But worse than all is this, that the sinister alliance between Church and State has so utterly misrepresented the whole spirit and tendency of Christianity as to alienate from it a large proportion of the best elements of European society. I know not a sadder fact than this—for I am afraid that an indisputable fact it is—that the great bulk of the Liberal party, of the friends of political progress on the Continent, are sceptics if not unbelievers. Dr. Geffcken, in his

able work on Church and State, says in reference to the conflict going on in Germany, "that as the result of it all the elements hostile to any Church have been fortified; most of what the Liberal press says against the Catholic Church might as well be said against the Christian faith in general;" and that "the masses are becoming either irreligious or Ultramontane."* Mr. Laveleye says that "France is above all things in want of men who, without breaking with tradition, are willing to accept new ideas. The Republicans are generally hostile or indifferent to all religious ideas." He bewails the same thing in reference to his own country, and is earnestly endeavouring to convince those who with himself are striving to maintain Liberal institutions in Belgium against the invasions of Roman absolutism, that they cannot combat this power by mere negotiations in religion; that the only effectual way of attacking the Church of Rome is "by showing that she has wandered from the doctrines of Christ, and by preaching a purer and more severe Christianity than hers." The same, I fear, in Italy. I was greatly struck by a remark made by a most intelligent Italian at Milan. I was expressing, and with all sincerity, my delight at the indications I saw of national regeneration in Italy, by their intellectual, educational, and commercial activity. "Yes," he said, "but there is one grievous want; we have no real, earnest religious faith: the priests have killed religion in this country."

Why is this? Why is it that men of patriotic aspirations and of advanced political views are thus disposed to look askance at Christianity? Why, because instead of having had the Gospel presented to them as the perfect law of

*Geffcken, ii. 529.

liberty, as the true charter of freedom to the nations, they have always seen it associated with those who have been the sworn friends of absolutism and repression. For despotism and priestcraft have always been faithful allies, leagued in an eternal conspiracy against the rights and liberties of mankind. Yes, we have a right to say to popes and cardinals, and prelates, and other representatives of official religion all over the world, "The name of God is blasphemed among the nations through you."

But who can describe how the Church of Christ is itself degraded and dishonoured by this alliance? You have already heard something of the way in which the Church of France was dragged through the mire by Napoleon. The history of every other Established Church will furnish abundant illustration of indignities the same in kind, if not so extreme in character.

When Aurelian, the Roman Emperor, conquered Palmyra, the City of the Desert, he took captive Zenobia, its illustrious queen. She is represented as having been a woman of surpassing and majestic beauty, as well as of a noble and heroic character. The conqueror, on his return to Rome, of course paraded her in his train, and, in order to give greater *clat* to his triumph, had her clothed in the most gorgeous robes, and hung around her person a quantity of costly and splendid jewellery, and over all threw chains of gold, by which she was bound to his triumphal car, and compelled her thus to walk in procession through the streets of Rome, borne down to the earth by the weight of these ornaments, and still more by the bitter humiliation to which she was exposed, until the very populace of Rome, hungry as they were for such displays, cried shame on the brutality of Aurelian. It is thus that the princes of the earth have acted towards the Church, the Bride of Christ. They have clothed

her in the goodly Babylonish garment which they found among the ruins of heathenism ; they have heaped upon her the adornments of worldly grandeur and dignity, and by golden chains of rich endowments have bound her to the car of their own ambition. But what heart who understands anything of what the Church of Christ should be, does not swell with indignation at the shameful sight? What voice is not induced to cry, Loose her and let her go? Cut asunder that chain of gold, fling away those meretricious, worldly ornaments, tear off the Babylonish garments, which only tend to fetter her free movements, and to mar her divine beauty! Loose her and let her go! and, instead of thus trailing in the dust, in the wake of earthly conquerors, she will arise and spread her wings, and be seen, like the vision that John saw, as an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell in the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue.

THE END.

